



# LUTHERAN EDUCATION

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# Lutheran Education

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# From Where I Sit

By Jonathan M. Barz, Editor

## Turning Our Hearts Toward Home(-Schoolers)

In the pages that follow, David Ludwig outlines ways in which schools can build more mutually supportive relationships with families. Keith Loomans defines the task of the Lutheran school as "family ministry," outreach to the families of school children. And Peg Anderson reminds us that church workers and their families need to be ministered to, as well. The specific ideas each offers are stimulating and challenging; I don't expect, however, that many will find fault with their basic premises. But while we're thinking about ministering to families, I'd like to encourage Lutheran educators need to consider one more set of families to whom we might minister: home-schoolers. Judging by the recent sampling of highly emotional letters to *The Lutheran Witness* on this topic, clearly we are far from consensus on this issue (Sept. and Nov., 1999).

One of the few things all can agree on regarding home-schooling is that the numbers are large and growing larger. More than a million children are currently being home-schooled in the United States (at least 1% of all school age children), and the number is growing by about 15% per year. A recent study reveals that 90 percent of home-schoolers are Christian. The perception exists that these are mostly fundamentalists and evangelicals, but the same study shows that home-schooling is growing fastest among more "mainstream" Christians such as Lutherans. Although currently only 1.7% of home-schooling mothers list their religion as Lutheran, this percentage represents at least 17-20,000 students (<http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v7n8/>). The number of Lutheran parents choosing to educate their children at home is already significant and is likely to grow substantially in the near future.

Why this sudden surge of interest in home-schooling? Home-schoolers are too diverse for any single answer to suffice. Historically, they have tended to fall into one of two camps: those who want their religious values reinforced in their children's education and those who seek new ways of teaching to replace traditional instruction. Some are simply fleeing public schools (and perhaps even parochial schools) they view as violent, undisciplined, and academically inadequate. Many home-schoolers are simply convinced that children are best educated and socialized at home by their parents rather than in schools by teachers and their peers (see, for example, Jastram, *Lutheran Education*, Nov/Dec, 1995).

I don't wish to debate here the merits of home-schooling or to encourage or discourage parents from pursuing this option. The simple fact is that, for better or for worse, we can expect that

significant numbers of parents who might otherwise choose Lutheran schools will opt to educate their children at home. That reality is largely beyond our control. The relevant question becomes, how will Lutheran schools, teachers, and administrators choose to respond to families who have made this choice?

Too often, Lutheran educators have responded with a mixture of suspicion, fear, and antagonism. It's an understandable reaction, very human and very practical. For Lutheran parents to choose not to send their children to Lutheran schools can feel like an affront to something we value deeply. When the parent is a church worker, this sense of betrayal is compounded by what seems a public relations disaster. Furthermore, for tuition-driven Lutheran schools, the loss of even a few students has definite budget implications. A recent letter published in *The Lutheran Witness* (Oct. 1999) sums up this fear: "Our synod should not be supporting home schooling with materials and workshops. That would be like supporting the competition."

This comment raises two crucial questions which might govern our responses to home-schooling families: What are we competing for? And with whom are we competing? Put even more simply, do Lutheran schools compete for tuition dollars or souls? Do Lutheran schools compete *against* families, or do we compete *with* them against various spiritually destructive social forces?

If Lutheran schools take seriously Keith Loomans' claim that our schools are above all a form of "family ministry,"

they must consider how to extend that ministry to those who have chosen home-schooling. To turn our backs on these families, reproaching them for turning their backs on us, simply will not do. If our schools exist not for their own sake but for the sake of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we need to cast our nets as broadly as possible in considering which families we are to serve.

(More pragmatically, we might remember that many home-schooled children move in and out of school at various times. Schools that serve the needs of home-schooled children now, are more likely to have an opportunity to serve them as students later.)

To spell out exactly how Lutheran schools might best address the needs of home-schooling families would require a lengthy article (any volunteers?). I'll simply suggest a few areas for schools to discuss. Consider allowing home-schooled students to enroll in selected classes that are hard to replicate at home—computer labs, ensemble music classes, and the like—or to compete on athletic teams. Support them by offering testing services and curriculum support. Encourage home-schoolers to join in the worship life of the school, inviting them to participate in chapel or school choir. Include home-schoolers in special activities such as Christmas services or school plays.

As Loomans insists, Lutheran schools exist as part of a larger ministry "to reach the lost, disciple the saved, and care for people." It's time to embrace home-schooling families within this mission.†

## Is Your School a "Safe Place"?

David Ludwig is the chair of the psychology department at Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, NC. He received his PhD from Washington University in experimental psychology in 1966. A graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, he also serves as assistant to the pastor at Christ Lutheran Church in Hickory. He has written 6 books, 3 video series, and over 100 articles in popular and professional journals and frequently conducts seminars on the relationship of faith to personal and family life.

*M*s. Jenson picked on me again," Johnny whined to his mother, "and made me embarrassed in front of the whole class." He knew that the picture of him being embarrassed would get to his mother, so he played it up. "She made me come up right to her desk and all the other kids were looking and laughing at me."

That's all his mother needed to hear. She picked up the phone and relayed the latest development to her close friend, whose son was in Johnny's class. After fifteen minutes, they had concluded that the teacher was at fault and vowed that they would double their efforts to get the teacher fired. They already knew that there was tension between the principal and this teacher, so their next step was to stop by and rehash this latest offense.

Of course the tension had a history to it. The teacher had been there long before the principal came and did not like his "keep everyone happy" style. Early on, she had brought Johnny to his office, asking him to discipline him for his subtle ways of defying her. She noticed Johnny had emerged from his office smiling and

## *Is Your School a "Safe Place"?*

*was even more defiant than before. That was the last time she asked him for help in discipline, and their relationship grew more strained over the year.*

*Then matters were complicated by the teacher's husband. He was a close friend of the pastor and had long conversations about the new principal's lack of discipline. The pastor's attitude was affected by these conversations, and throughout the year the relationship between pastor and principal deteriorated. Of course, the matter was talked about between friends of both sides with enough blame to go around.*

*So when Johnny talked back to his teacher, then whined to his mother, he knew that he would not be punished. He had the power to be disrespectful—power that came from the breakdown of the critical relationships that made up the school system!*

Could you call your school a "safe place?" (Ludwig, 1997a). Is it a safe place for you? Is it a safe place for the teacher who is going through a personal crisis? Would she find a safe haven—or would there just be gossip, indifference, or funny looks? What about the child who is a bit different? Is your school safe?

What makes a school a "safe place"? The answer has to do with *relationships*! A "safe place" is formed by good relationships. The child will find the home a safe place if the parents are in charge and are a "we." That united front formed by a strong, loving marital relationship makes the home safe (Ludwig, 1997b). With the "we" in charge, decisions are made out of loving concern for all involved and the boundaries are firm!

Your school is a "safe place" if those in charge form a united front—if there is a healthy "we." If there are problems, especially among the critical

relationships (among staff and between staff and parents), the school becomes dysfunctional.

In fact, your school is *in the relationship business*! (Ludwig, 1986). God's will

is clearly expressed by Christ: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind . . . love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt. 22:37-39). In other words, the secret of a Christian community revolves around a vital relationship with God, caring relationships with others, and a loving relationship with self.

The life of the school community must be organized around nurturing

The secret of a Christian community revolves around a vital relationship with God, caring relationships with others, and a loving relationship with self.

these relationships and its energy should be spent on building relationships:

1. *With God*—by listening to God in Word and Sacrament and talking to Him in prayer;
2. *Between staff*—by providing opportunities for sharing personal lives and resolving conflicts;
3. *Between staff and parents*—by good communication;
4. *Within family units*—by helping with marriage communication and parent-child interaction;
5. *With self*—by helping those with personal struggles.

All relationships are spiritual in nature, affected by sin and in need of reconciliation. Feelings are hurt, anger turns into sin, and resentment builds up day by day (Ludwig, 1989). People turn from God, factions develop within the school community, and resentment destroys the family units: the school is no longer a safe place!

The power of the Gospel is the power of reconciliation. Christ is at work within the heart (Ludwig, 1995). Through Word and Sacrament, God strengthens our faith, convincing us of His love. As we spend time in God's reality, our hearts are changed. The need for defensiveness and getting even is taken away as He "renews a right spirit within." We are empowered to be "ministers of reconciliation." It is through this process, continued on a daily basis, that the school becomes a

"safe place."

This mission of your school is especially important in an increasingly-dysfunctional age. The culture models bad relationships and gives bad advice for dealing with conflict. The challenge for your school is to *become a center of wellness for the community!* Our communities are in trouble. Family units have broken down, leaving troubled children, destructive teens, angry adults—there are very few "safe places" left. In this situation, the school can become a place that begins to rebuild community—a safe place that teaches and models healthy relationships.

### **Implications for the School**

#### **1. Help people reconnect with God.**

The secularization of our culture makes God basically irrelevant to the daily life of the person who is tossed around by competing views of reality. Devotions, meditation, prayer, and study of the Bible are replaced by keeping up with the latest discoveries in this age of information. Daily spiritual discipline (Sonnenberg, 1994) and the inner peace and strength it gives must be part of the school's life together. Prayer from the heart as a response to God's Word, for example, must be taught and modeled. The school can be the place where people spend "heart time" with God.

*The tension was thick the first morning, but all the church and school staff had made a commitment to gather each morning before school started for*



## *Is Your School a "Safe Place"?*

*15 minutes of Bible study and prayer. They worked through the book of Ephesians, verse by verse, then ended with prayers for personal situations and for the staff community. Something happened to the tension as hearts were turned toward one another!*

### **2. Help people become more honest and less selfish.**

In a culture where the individual must use anything to survive, including deceit and justification, honesty and integrity must be taught and modeled at your school. The power of confession and forgiveness to strengthen the spirit must replace defensiveness and concern for self-esteem. Service to others must replace self-centered living.

*After a month of daily Bible study and prayer, the staff also made a commitment to spend a half hour together one afternoon each week to talk over sensitive situations. Each person was asked to write down a situation that seemed unresolved from the previous week(s). The sessions began with prayer, then a situation was drawn out of the hat and honestly discussed with each person involved giving their feelings. Each*

*situation ended with prayer before another was drawn.*

### **3. Help people build relationships with each other.**

Each function of the school should begin with relationship-building time. For example, a parent-teacher meeting should spend the first half hour in Bible study, prayer, and personal sharing (in "being" together in Christ), then the second half hour in "doing" its business!

*A deliberate effort was made for the teacher and parents to form a "we" for the benefit of the children. The parents were encouraged to invite the teacher to their home to get better acquainted with the family. Also written guidelines were given so that the teacher would call the parents if the child talked about something that happened at home and the parents were to call the teacher if the child complained about what happened in school.*

Each function of the school should begin with relationship-building time. For example, a parent-teacher meeting should spend the first half hour in Bible study, prayer, and personal sharing (in "being" together in Christ), then the second half hour in "doing" its business!

### **4. Help people be reconciled.**

Whenever people get upset with each other, it should be common practice that they get tapped on the shoulder and invited to talk things over face to face so that they can "be reconciled." The

school must model the reconciliation process in its own life, then others will be attracted to this community because of how "they love one another," not by "how they cut each other down!"

*When Johnny's mother stopped by the principal's office with her friend, complaining about the teacher, the principal excused himself and went to get Ms. Jenson. As they walked back in together, Johnny's mother started to protest, but the principal advised kindly that it would be much better to talk about the situation with everyone present. He began with a prayer, then asked each to give her perception of the situation. Something changed when Johnny's mother heard the compassion in his teacher's voice when she described Johnny's disrespect. "I'm worried about his future if he is allowed to talk back," she was saying when his mother broke in, "I did not realize how he was treating you. I guess I was listening only to him. I have been too protective since our divorce. We need to work together more." She had tears in her eyes as she talked, and Ms. Jenson reached over and gave her a supportive touch.*

**5. Provide a safe place for those going through personal or family problems.**

As the school works on its relationships, it will be a "safe place" for all involved. It will become more attractive. The new mission field of our age is the family. The culture no longer

supports the family unit, and the results show up in the quiet desperation of family members living isolated and strained lives (Ludwig, 1989). The school has access to the families of its community and can provide a "safe place" that will strengthen family relationships.

*"Ms. Jenson picked on me again," Johnny whined to his mother, "and made me embarrassed in front of the whole class." He knew that the picture of him being embarrassed would get to his mother, so he played it up. "She made me come up right to her desk and all the other kids were looking and laughing at me."*

*That's all his mother needed to hear. She picked up the phone right there in front of Johnny and called his teacher. Johnny paled as she asked, "Ms. Jenson, do you have time to talk? Johnny just came home and said you picked on him. He is standing right here in front of me, and I want to hear from you before I go any further." Johnny tried to escape, but his mother kept him right there until she finished. "Thank you, Ms. Jenson, and I hope I can call you again when something like this occurs," Johnny's mother concluded, then sat down by Johnny after she hung up the phone. "Do you have something to tell me?" she said, pointedly, looking straight at Johnny.*

*He knew his little game was over. Johnny hung his head and began to explain how he had made fun of the*

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teacher when her back was turned, but then got caught. "Was that the right thing to do?" his mother asked. Johnny knew what was right and promised he would not make fun of his teacher again. "I trust that you will not," his mother cautioned, "If we let you get by with that, then the whole class does not have the chance to learn. That is not a good situation. So you realize that if this happens again, your teacher and I will talk and get to the bottom of this."

Needless to say, Johnny's behavior was a bit different in school. He had lost his power, but his respect and his learning improved! †

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### **Correction**

In the November/December issue of *Lutheran Education*, Gene Edward Veith and Erik Ankerberg wrote, "another Lutheran high school is in the works, the Robert Preuss Academy in Decatur, Illinois" ("The Classical Education Movement and Lutheran Schools," p. 74). The proposed Robert Preuss Academy is to be located in Peoria rather than Decatur. The Lutheran High School starting in Decatur, tentatively scheduled to open in the fall of 2000, is part of the Lutheran School Association of Decatur. It is **not** affiliated in any way with the classical education movement described in the article. *Lutheran Education* regrets any confusion this error may have caused.

## It's About Fishing: The Lutheran School as Family Ministry

*Keith A. Loomans served for 28 years on the Texas District Parish Services staff, where his responsibilities included school ministry. He holds bachelors and masters degrees from Concordia, River Forest, IL, and was awarded the Doctor of Letters degree by his alma mater in 1990. A frequent presenter at educator conferences and seminars, he also authored the pupil guide for This Is The Christian Faith, Concordia Catechism Series (CPH, 1967) and contributed to How To Become A Better Teacher, a course for volunteer teachers.*

When Jesus told His disciples, “. . . from now on you will catch men” (Luke 5:10, NIV), it was a promise about what they would be doing in His kingdom. These were experienced fishermen. They knew what fishing was all about! They knew that fishing required fish, fishermen, fishing equipment, a place to fish, and time—lots of time. They knew that fishing required anticipation, planning, preparation, presentation (putting the right nets in the right place, etc.), participation, patience, and practice. Now they probably wondered if fishing for people would require the same?

We who are in the “fishing for people business” know that it does! We know that fishing for people, too, requires “fish,” “fishermen,” equipment, a place to fish, and time—lots of time. We know that such fishing also requires anticipation, planning, preparation, presentation (the proper approaches, etc.), participation, patience, and practice. All these, plus the very important ingredient of prayer!

In the ocean, fish gather in schools. In life, “fish” come in families! In the Church, the congregation is a gathering of families. Church consultants describe the congregation as an organization ministering to three distinct groups of people. Group one is made up of

members. In group two are all those people who come onto the church property, for one reason or another, four to six times in a six month period. These are called constituents. Church analysts claim that a growing church can identify a significant group of constituents. These would include visitors to church services who continue to come back. It would include service people. And, if the congregation has a school, the constituent group would include all those children and adults who daily come unto the property for the ministry of the school. It is from this constituent group that many congregations experience growth.

The third group the congregation serves is described as "people served in mission." These are people who are touched by the ministry of the congregation and its members but not on church property. This group includes people who receive special care baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas, people touched by members at their place of work, and the like. Sometimes people in this group become constituents when they become curious about the care they have received and visit the church. They find something there that draws them back and the love of Christ becomes an element of relationships!

When a congregation has a school most members are aware of the existence of that school. However, from member to member there are often significant differences in perceptions of the purpose

of the school and its relationship to the congregation.

To illustrate that point, when speaking to a group I have had participants draw a circle to represent the congregation. I then instructed them to draw another circle, the school circle, in relation to the congregation circle. Depending on the individual's point of view and perception, some circles were drawn a number of inches away from the congregation circle, others were drawn closer, both indicating a gap in relationship. Some drew their circle just touching the other. Some drew the circle with a little bit of it in the congregation. Some drew the circle mostly in the congregation circle with a little bit out, while some had it overlapping half and half. These may have been describing the ratio of member and non-member student enrollment. Some drew the circle completely inside the congregation circle. For some, this meant that they thought all the students were members. However, others put the school circle inside the congregation circle because they saw the school as an integral element and agency of congregation ministry. That is where it should be! The school is a vital resource for the family ministry of the congregation.

To be able to say, "the school is a vital resource for the family ministry of the congregation," one has to understand the place of the school in the scheme of organizational planning. Planning is an ongoing process by which an

organization, including the congregation, focuses its resources—time, talents, financial resources, etc.—to bring about certain actions. Guided by a mission statement and vision, leaders in congregations establish goals that will result in ministry to certain groups of people or will enhance and strengthen functions of ministry. Generally speaking, the congregation has six functions. These are fellowship, nurture, service, stewarding, witness, and worship. Once goals are in place, the leadership establishes objectives (what is to be done) and strategies/tactics (how it is to be done). The organization's values, policies, and structure guide this process. What is the Lutheran school in this process? The school is a strategy/tactic, "a how", through which the congregation meets an objective in reaching a goal.

### **A Change in the Purpose of the Lutheran School**

The ministry of a Lutheran school is generally focused on two groups of people, the students and the parents and other family members of each student.

The present and future major function of the school for the congregation is to give the congregation connection to the parents of the school children, ministering in the family setting! When that happens, the congregation has gone beyond just having a school to having a school ministry!

The purpose of the Lutheran school in the past has generally been that of providing a Christian education for the children of the congregation. The school was a "faith nurturing agency" of the congregation. Sometimes the enrollment included non-member families. Sometimes these were unchurched.

Through the relationship of the school to the congregation's ministry, by the power of the Holy Spirit, some of these unchurched children were brought to faith and baptized; some unchurched adults were brought to faith, baptized, and confirmed. As more and more non-member children were enrolled in our

schools, the aforementioned process became more commonplace. In some congregations there were definite plans to minister to the non-members, the constituents of the congregation. However, in most congregations it was not intentional. The focus of ministry of the Lutheran school was on children and the school staff were the primary ministers in the process.

What happens when the focus of the school is changed? What happens when the congregation, its leaders and its

## *It's About Fishing*

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members, realizes that the school is *about fishing*? Then the congregation understands that through the school connection the faith life of both children and adults can be nurtured. The congregation leaders understand that, through the school, people are entering the ministry of the congregation where, by the power of the Spirit, they will experience the love of God in their lives.

An excellent school attracts families of the community. The congregation provides the resources that will allow the staff to provide an excellent education—an excellent Christian education. The staff will focus on the children. Who will touch the lives of the adults? Congregation members! It is their opportunity to fish!

I believe that the present and future major function of the school for the congregation is to give the congregation connection to the parents of the school children, ministering in the family setting! When that happens, the congregation has gone beyond just having a school to having a school ministry!

It's about fishing! It's about building the web of relationships to minister to, with, and through families of the congregation and community.

Looking at this in a planning scheme, the congregation leaders determine that they want to focus on ministry to the families of congregation and community. In preferred future terms, the leaders state that goal as

follows: "Redeemer Lutheran Church is in ministry to, with, and through families of the congregation and community." The congregation next decides that one objective shall be that by 12/31 the congregation has connected in at least 5 significant ways with 25 new families. That's the "what" they want to do. Now, they have to decide the "hows," how they will do that. They decide that one way to touch young families is through a school and establish that as a strategy/tactic. Redeemer Lutheran School is a strategy/tactic for reaching congregations goals in family ministry.

It is important to the next steps in the process that congregation leaders understand school ministry as family ministry. Furthermore, they must understand the interaction of school ministry with all functions of congregation ministry. The school is an agency of the nurture function of the congregation, and oversight is the responsibility of a board with a nurturing purpose. When the school is seen as an integral part of congregation ministry, then those responsible for the other functions of the congregation will consider the school also from the standpoint of fellowship, service, stewarding, witness, and worship.

It's about fishing! Fishermen fish where fish are! They have excellent equipment to help them locate the fish. Then it's a matter of what equipment and bait to use.

It's about fishing! When God's

people are fishing, they do so where there are fish! The school is or can be one of the congregation's important fishing pools. The congregation is in ministry to all the families represented in the Lutheran school enrollment.

What does the fishing plan/process look like? It is multi-faceted and includes such things as the following: staff prayer support, staff home visit partners, fishing buddies, a care system, student/family information, information network, and networking with churches of non-member parents.

### **Staff Prayer Support**

In church worship services and whenever appropriate, petitions are raised to God that, through the staff members and the students, God's love and care are shared in the classrooms and school. Staff members have prayer partners. Each staff member is prayed for daily by at least five people, preferably members of the congregation who have no immediate connection with school ministry. The Prayer Ministry Committee or Evangelism Board recruits these prayer partners for this ministry. The prayer partners are given sample prayers. Weekly or periodically staff members share with their partners any

specific prayer needs. Parent prayer groups assemble for prayer at the beginning of each school day.

### **School Ministry Home Visit Team**

Prior to the beginning of the school year, every home of every family with a student enrolled is visited by a "school ministry home visit team." That team is composed of the teacher and a member of the congregation recruited and trained to minister to school families. Each teacher has a number of these trained individuals on his/her team to facilitate all the family visits. No visit is made without such a

The purpose of the visit is to develop a relationship with the family and to share with the family that, "because you enrolled your child in our school you are going to get more than you bargained for! We will pray for the family, we will care for the family when in need, etc."

person present. The purpose of the visit is to develop a relationship with the family and to share with the family that, "because you enrolled your child in our school you are going to get more than you bargained for!

We will pray for the family, we will care for the family when in need, etc." In the course of the visit, parents receive some information regarding the school. However, most of that is in print. The emphasis is on including the family in the net of congregational ministry. The congregation member of the school ministry home visit team is there to meet



the family members so that he or she can connect with parents and family members at future events when these people are involved. When invitations are sent to parents or legal care-givers regarding a school ministry event, school ministry team members make follow-up phone calls on the families they visited, making a more personal invitation, checking whether transportation will be needed to attend, and letting them know that he or she will be eager to see the family members at the event. That's a part of fishing!

### **Fishing Buddies**

Every congregation member of the School Ministry Home Visit Team has a number of "fishing buddies." Fishing buddies are members of the congregation who have been recruited and trained for outreach/evangelism work. Each school ministry visitor has a number of fishing-buddies. Every so-called school event is actually a congregation family ministry event. These are fishing events where the school ministry home visit team members, aided by their fishing-buddies, are present and developing relationships with those present, especially non-member families.

If a school ministry home visit team member makes visits on five families, the team member should have five fishing buddies. That allows the team member to introduce another congregation member (the fishing buddy) into the relationship. When invitations are sent

out announcing the next church event, there will be at least two, if not more, follow-up calls.

It's about fishing! The desire of the congregation is that all school families hear about the love of Jesus and experience that love. They are going to get more than they bargained for!

### **Care System**

All school families are part of the congregation care system. Families of the congregation and school are prayed for in worship services. When a sickness is reported in any family, there is prayer and care, including visits by congregation "fishing buddies" and staff. Congregation care at the time of a death covers all in the influence of the congregation ministry. At such times the pastoral staff may become more involved in relating to non-member families.

### **Student/Family Information**

The registration/enrollment form includes information that will help the congregation minister to the student and family. The church affiliation of the family is required including the name of the family's minister(s). The registration/enrollment information is compiled within two weeks and reviewed by staff, noting especially non-members and unchurched family ministry opportunities.

### **Information Network**

Student/family information is shared

with appropriate boards/committees within a month of the school opening. Boards/committees implement an action plan pertaining to school family ministry.

### **Networking with Churches of Non-Member Parents**

Based on family church affiliation information, the pastor visits the ministers of churches listed by non-member families. The purpose of the visit is to verify family church information and to talk about how the Lutheran church will be a partner in supporting the spiritual, emotional, and physical growth of the family.

The ministry of the congregation is to reach the lost, disciple the saved, and care for people—locally and globally. When congregation members understand that they have a school to facilitate their ministry to families of the congregation and the community, then they see the

opportunities to support families spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually and behaviorally, all in the name of and for Christ! By the power of the Holy Spirit and with His blessing, the results may be threefold. Unchurched children and adults are brought to faith and become members of the congregation. Children and family members of the congregation are nurtured in their discipleship. Christian non-member children and their family members are supported and strengthened in their faith life and their faith community.

The Lutheran school is a family ministry by design! It is an integral element of congregation ministry. *It is saying and doing God's love among families!*

*It's about fishing! " . . . from now on you will catch men." (Luke 5:10)†*

## When the Sky is Falling: Shepherding Church Workers through Times of Crisis

*Margaret Anderson is a veteran LCMS teacher and musician who is now a graduate student in the Deaconess Colloquy Program of Concordia University - River Forest, her alma mater.*

**T**he telephone rang with the dreaded announcement that someone dear just died. It was no use. That marriage, once deemed “made in heaven,” was clearly over. In spite of all the safety measures, the fire comprehensively destroyed the house. They were the model Christian family. No one would ever believe drugs or alcohol would ever invade their home.

These tragedies are not unusual. They happen to people every day. But when “the sky falls” on professional church workers, reactions may tend to surface in a myriad of destructive forms. Members of the congregation can sometimes blow a problem way out of proportion, forever corroding the congregation’s relationship with that worker. Conversely, colleagues—who are supposed to be partners in ministry—can sometimes dismiss any personal involvement in a situation as not important, or merely “someone else’s problem,” forcing the hurting partner(s) to persevere without even minimal collegial support.

After all, God’s called servants have been charged

with ministering to the needs of His people. They have been equipped with gifts of knowledge and insight, and they serve the Church as a living reminder of God's presence. Thus, they are supposed to remain steadfast in their ministry at all cost. Right?

For the most part, this is true. But "when the sky falls" on these called, but now *victimized* servants, someone else must be prepared to confront and minister to *their needs*, and perhaps for quite a lengthy period of time. Someone must be there to facilitate *their* necessary process of grief, mourning, regrouping, and recovery. But, at this present time, who—at any level—addresses these needs?

For the most part? No one. Thus the reason for this discussion. I can recall all too many scenarios, some even personally, where a trauma was worsened by some strategically bad moves. Had even an informal shepherding program been in place, with the professional church workers included in the care-giving/receiving loop, what had begun as a crisis of life (and faith) could have evolved into a powerful growth experience—for everyone. But there wasn't one. And people were badly hurt.

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There is not enough room in this journal to adequately expound on a topic of such underestimated import, but I will try in this article to strike the surface, (a) to stimulate some serious discussions in local settings, and (b) to propose workable approaches that can be *implemented immediately*, so that in the next crisis, people will be able to respond appropriately and quickly.

### Setting the Congregational Ground Work

Pastors, deaconesses, DCEs, and day school faculties, can initiate this topic in Sunday worship, day school chapels, and Bible class discussions. Revisit the origin of all our sadness, as recorded in

Genesis, chapter three. Explore together how the wages of sin (that would necessitate Jesus' coming) have affected everyone, including "good Christian families" and church workers.

Discuss a definition of loss such as this: "Loss is *something* you had or *someone* who was here, but is now gone, and is not ever coming back." (Use whatever wording is appropriate, but be sure that it is accurate.)

Because loss is irreversible, the reality of a loss is devastating. Illustrate some of the feelings and emotions

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associated with loss. Be sure to make a connection between the feelings and emotions and the behaviors that can accompany them. Explain how all of these elements can impact the home, the work place, and the church and discuss the importance of having this understanding.

Most people in the audience will associate loss with death, but many non-death losses can be equally traumatic. What *non-death losses* can alter or forever change people's lives? Consider, for example, losses associated with divorce, friendship, geographic moves, graduation, amputation, sight or hearing, job or livelihood, restructuring of the family (the "empty nest"), privacy in marriage, or a theft; personal victimization through molestation or other abuse; losses of a home by tornado, fire, hurricane or earthquake; loss of reputation, identity, personal independence, control over one's body and possessions, and/or personal and medical decisions (including end-of-life).

In his book, *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner*, J. William Worden (1991) suggests that there are four tasks of mourning losses:

- To accept the reality of the loss;
- To experience and work through the pain of grief;
- To adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing (with non-death loss, learning some new routines);

To withdraw emotional energy from the loss and invest in the future.

Explain the basic process that all people must personally experience in order to mourn their loss(es) and move on in their life. Brainstorm what would be involved at each point. (Emphasize with everyone that there are no short-cuts in this process—not even for church workers.)

It should be noted that nowhere does Scripture promise problem-free lives to Christian believers, but God does invite us (Matthew 11:28) to bring our problems to Him, and He promises to be there (Hebrews 13:5b) to help us to accept them and work through them (Isaiah 41:10).

Explore in depth the "Theology of the Cross"—how our Lord is present in the midst of all of our sufferings: to listen, to guide, to console, and always to strengthen us. Emphasize how Jesus understands suffering—since He has cornered the market on it. Isaiah 53:4-6 recalls how Jesus took all the world's problems onto Himself, loving us so much that, as St. Paul points out, "while we were yet sinners," He died for us (Romans 5:8b).

Be sure to avoid all the clichés. They fill the need to offer a pat answer, but they are not helpful. Instead, accentuate the truth contained in Romans 8:28 and God's promises in I Peter 5:7 and John 14:27.

Investigate how our Lord approached

people in the midst of crisis as well as the example we all can follow from the parable of service “to the least of these” (Matthew 25:40).

### **Developing a Multi-Faceted Approach**

Shepherding needs change as time passes. Mourning goes through relative phases. After preparing some general approaches to the losses that may be encountered by congregation or staff members, address what may be needed at each “phase.” Be sensitive to holidays, milestone days (including birthdays and anniversaries of any important event), and *weekends*—especially *Sundays*, which are usually “family” days. What informal procedures might you implement that would be helpful in each phase? Have each committee person place herself in the position of a mourner and begin with what might be helpful *to the grieving person*.

In *the Immediate Phase* (from the onset of the problem through the first couple of months), emotions can be more powerful than reasoning. It is a very high-stress time. There can be many major decisions to make in a span of as little as the first 48 hours. Shepherds will need to be very patient, prepared to help with many routine things, and careful when asked for their personal advice.

*The Coping Phase* (from about the third month through the first year anniversary) will encompass those milestone days. Find out about any

special rituals that might be meaningful as the mourner remembers them. Remain encouraging but also understanding if the mourner wishes to pass through any of those times alone, or if the manner in which he chooses to remember may seem strange to you. There are no set rules for marking milestones. It is what is most helpful or comforting *to the mourner* that is paramount.

*The On-going Phase* (12-24 months and sometimes longer) may include repeated storytelling. Be respectful enough to listen. Each time the story is told, the mourner is in a different place in working through the process. By listening respectfully, you affirm the importance of this person, place, or item in the mourner’s life, and in her mind, you are being the most supportive.

After working through the issues of each phase and considering the people of your particular congregation and/or day school, construct a general shepherding plan whereby a selected group of people will be appointed to support a person (or a whole family might support a family) through the first two years after a tragic crisis.

The “shepherd” will want to decide some form of outreach to mark the important checkpoints in the plan: cards, phone calls, prepared meals, outings, home visitations (involving 95% listening), or other practical ways to help. At the same time, they will want to be sure to identify them on their calendar or

## Shepherding Church Workers through Times of Crisis

appointment book, too!

### **Constructing a Parallel Plan for Church Workers**

Because a protective façade often partitions their personal life away from the public side of ministry, it can be easy to perceive church workers as living in a “bubble”—disconnected from the problems of the world. But this very misconception denies God’s called workers their humanity, their sinfulness, their needs, their personal situations, *and* their crises.

With the on-board staff of church workers included, brainstorm a list of needs basic to all workers, especially when they are facing *any* personal crisis: such as affirming, supporting, listening, and offering practical assistance. Focusing in on those particular needs of your pastors, deaconesses, teachers, DCEs, DEOs, and parish nurses, what immediate and long-range measures (personal and/or professional) might help “shepherd” them as they attempt to cope

Because a protective façade often partitions their personal life away from the public side of ministry, it can be easy to perceive church workers as living in a “bubble”—disconnected from the problems of the world. But this very misconception denies God’s called workers their humanity, their sinfulness, their needs, their personal situations, *and* their crises.

with their personal problems while maintaining their full-time ministry to the Church?

When a crisis does arise, check with a trusted co-worker, friend, or family member for input, or better yet, call the grieving person or family at home. Then you can find out directly from them *how* they are doing and where they might need a hand with house cleaning, groceries, baby-sitting, simple meal preparation, phone calling, errands, *etc.*

Based on what you learn, chart out a two-year shepherding plan just for that worker (and/or their family). Put it on the

calendar, and follow through. If the worker has a family, perhaps a small group can split up the responsibilities.

Just a thought: congregations that get deeply involved in a concerted effort such as this may notice that, over time, their workers and parishioners may bond together more closely and maintain better spiritual health. An added benefit might be that we may eventually

slow down the number of people leaving church professions because of the mishandling of their grief issues.

Coinciding with that, congregational

leaders may begin to notice that some items, once considered major issues in voters' assembly agendas, PTL meetings, or Sunday morning coffee talk, may diminish (or disappear all together) because more energy is being expended on "living the Gospel" through mutual Christian caring-giving, rather than apathetically accepting the *status quo*. †

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### What Makes a Good School?

"I've found that the qualities of a school I thought mattered really don't. What makes a good school has very little to do with how rich or poor the students are or the type of curriculum that's taught. It has little to do with special programs, expansive playing fields, huge endowments, snappy uniforms, celebrity alumni, or whether the school is wired to the Internet. What makes a good school . . . is a feeling. A feeling shared by the entire staff that their particular school is special. The feeling that their school really belongs to them. . . When people are doing something they believe in, they do it better. There's more passion. When teachers are excited about what they're doing, students become excited and learn more.

Philip Manna, in *The Boston Globe*, 1997



## The Role of the Lutheran Teacher: C. F. W. Walther's Unsettled Legacy in Lutheran Education, Part Three

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**T**hrough precarious beginnings, phenomenal growth, and contemporary challenges, the LCMS has continued to demonstrate a stubborn commitment to a unique Christian educational system. The leadership and influence of C. F. W. Walther in establishing this singular educational system was massive, and much of his legacy to the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod remains in the schools of the LCMS. Walther was involved in Lutheran education at every level. He was directly involved in creating and maintaining Lutheran higher education from the founding of the “Log Cabin College” to the creation of the Addison Teachers College. Walther promoted Lutheran parish schools within his own congregations and on the greater synodical level, and he was directly involved in establishing the first Lutheran secondary schools in St. Louis, schools which became models for LCMS high schools throughout the United States.

Little has changed in the overall purpose and structure of the LCMS educational system since Walther’s day. Walther’s mission for Lutheran schools continues to be one of assistance for parents “to bring up their children in the nurture and instruction of the Lord

and to take care of their daily, pure Christian schooling” (Meyer, 1969, p. 116-117). Clear guidelines and traditions for parish support for most Lutheran elementary schools, association support for most Lutheran high schools, and the unique synodical system for Lutheran teacher education remain basically the same. On all of these levels, Walther’s influence was obvious and clearly effective.

However, an unresolved question that confronted Walther and continues to challenge the Missouri Synod concerns the role of the Lutheran teacher. Walther’s statements about the role of Lutheran teachers were characteristically shaped by theology, but his confusing use of terminology has resulted in a variety of translations and interpretations. In addition, changing circumstances within the Missouri Synod during Walther’s lifetime influenced his words and actions concerning the role of teachers.

During the early years of the Saxon settlement and the founding of the Missouri Synod, Walther’s words and actions concerning the Divine Call for Lutheran teachers were quite consistent. In 1840, Walther’s Johannesberg

congregation in Perry County, Missouri, issued a “Diploma of Vocation” to Teacher Geyer from St. Louis (Repp, 1947, p. 13). This formal call was recorded in the minutes of Trinity Congregation in St. Louis, and it was the first time that a Saxon congregation issued a formal Call document since their emigration to the United States in 1839. An essential element in Walther’s Altenburg Thesis in 1841 was that congregations had the power and duty to call ministers. Although no proof exists

that Walther actually wrote Geyer’s formal Call document, he was probably heavily involved in its composition. Walther was directly involved in composing many formal Call documents to teachers throughout

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his lifetime.

In 1856, when Adolph Biewend was installed as Teacher and Director of the St. Louis *Gymnasium*, Walther delivered the address, which became a foundational statement concerning the status of teachers in Missouri Synod schools. In his address, Walther stated that teachers “should be confident that their office was a divine office, part of the ministerial office established by God, and that their calls were divine calls” (Meyer, 1965, p. 30). In a series of articles published in

*Lehre und Wehre* from 1865 to 1871, Walther explained the Doctrine of the Call and its practical application. This Doctrine of the Call gave authority to the teaching ministry and safeguarded the positions of teachers by providing them with tenure (Mundinger, 1947, p. 214). Tenure for teachers was rare anywhere else in America at that time.

While Walther's definition of the Call for teachers is quite clear and consistent, his definition of the teaching office is unclear and controversial. In his address at Biewend's installation, Walther clearly defined teaching as "a divine office, part of the ministerial office established by God." However, in Thesis VIII of Part Two of *Church and Ministry*, Walther used the confusing term, "auxiliary office." These words tend to be Walther's most often quoted definition concerning the teaching office, and yet, translations and interpretations of these words vary.

J. T. Mueller's translation of *Church and Ministry* reads:

Hence the highest office is that of the ministry of the Word, with which all other offices are also conferred at the same time. Every other public office in the church is part of the ministry *of the Word or an auxiliary office* that supports the ministry, whether it be the elders who do not labor in the Word and doctrine (I Tim. 5:17) or the rulers or the deacons (the office of service in a narrow sense) or whatever other offices the church

may entrust to particular persons for special administration. Therefore, the offices of Christian day school teachers, almoners, sextons, precentors at public worship, and others are all to be regarded as ecclesiastical and sacred, for they take over a part of the one ministry of the Word and support the pastoral office. (C. F. W. Walther, 1852/1987, p. 289-290)

A translation by Dallmann, Dau, and Engelder (1938) states:

For with the apostolate the Lord has established in the church only one office, which embraces all offices of the church and by which the congregation is to be provided for in every respect. The highest office is the ministry of preaching, with which all other offices are simultaneously conferred. Therefore every other public office in the church is merely a part of the office of the ministry, or an *auxiliary office*, which is attached to the ministry of preaching, whether it be the eldership of such as do not labor in the Word and doctrine (I Tim. 1:15), or that of rulers (Rom. 13:8), or the diaconate (ministry of service *in the narrower sense*), or the administration of whatever office in the church may be assigned to particular persons. Accordingly the offices of *schoolteachers who have to teach the Word of God in their schools*, of almoners, of sextons, of

precentors in public worship, etc., are all to be regarded as sacred offices of the church, which exercise a part of the one office of the church and are aids to the ministry of preaching. (p. 79)

In both translations, Walther does not directly identify teaching as an "auxiliary office." Walther describes an auxiliary office as that which supports the ministry, such as the elders, who "do not labor in the Word and doctrine," rulers, deacons, and special administrative offices. Interestingly, the Dallmann, Dau, and Engelder translation specifies that teachers "have to teach the Word of God in their schools." The J. T. Mueller translation leaves out those crucial words. According to Arnold C. Mueller in *The Ministry of the Lutheran Teacher* (1964), "Auxiliary offices are nowhere mentioned in the New Testament" and "the term is not used in Scripture to designate any one of the various offices of the church" (p. 93). Mueller asserts,

It is evident that the term has tended to confuse. It has been employed to designate the position of teaching as a branch of the pastorate and, hence, subordinate to the pastorate. Actually the position of teacher is not a branch of the pastorate, nor is it subordinate to the pastorate, but like the pastorate it is one of the branches or forms of the general ministry. To avoid confusion, we ought to discard the term "auxiliary office" altogether

and speak only of the position of teacher. (pp. 94-95)

Since 1983, synodically trained teachers have been officially called "Commissioned Ministers of Religion," and it appeared that Walther's term "auxiliary office" was beginning to disappear from the synodical discourse. However, in July 1997, a new nomenclature debate began, and the definition of teaching as an "auxiliary office" reappeared. Once again, the Missouri Synod was obligated to return to inconsistent translations and confusing interpretations of Walther's words, as the Nomenclature Study Committee (1997) began its study with this assumption:

The NSC does not want to, nor is empowered to, change the LCMS position on the ministry, hence, Walther's book on *Kirche und Amt* (*Church and Ministry*) was taken as the norm for our understanding of the ministry. This is the Synod's official position.

Since Walther's words concerning the office of the Lutheran teacher are rather confusing and inconclusive, one might better understand Walther's regard for the teaching ministry by analyzing his actions. When Walther founded "The Log Cabin College" in 1839, he was actively committed and personally engaged in teacher training. Later, he wrote about this Saxon commitment:

They considered it their duty not to leave the founding of institutions for

the training and education of faithful teachers and ministers slothfully and carelessly to the future. Had not the solicitude for the future of the children with regard to church and school been the strongest motive for their immigration to America?

(Spitz, 1961, p. 69)

During Walther's lifetime, there was a constant shortage of pastors and teachers throughout the

Synod. Since pastors and teachers were trained together, teacher candidates often found themselves filling pulpits instead of classrooms. This trend compounded the difficulty in finding qualified teachers for the

classrooms. In Walther's defense, this necessity for filling classrooms probably caused him to yield his earlier expectations and ideals for teacher preparation. In 1861, one of Walther's St. Louis congregations needed a teacher. Walther asked Mr. Herman Miessler, a member of the congregation, to fill the teaching position. He said, "Miessler, I am in search of a school teacher." Miessler answered, "But I am no teacher. I have not had the proper education." Walther replied, "You can pray the Lord's Prayer, can you not? So, then,

you can also teach school" (Repp, 1947, p. 48).

In reality, as the Synod grew, the bulk of Walther's time and attention was devoted to the theoretical training of pastors and theologians at the St. Louis seminary, and his attention to the training and ministry of Lutheran teachers showed wavering commitments and expectations. In practice, teacher

training was relegated to the Fort Wayne seminary where it was eventually separated from pastoral training. As the Fort Wayne *gymnasium* grew, the teachers' seminary was moved to an attic of a bookstore in the city. Then, it was forced to move again to a

former tavern, two miles from the city limits. Students had to sleep in an adjoining barn (Baepler, 1947, p.125). Finally, in 1864, a new teachers seminary was founded in Addison, Illinois.

Walther appreciated rigorous scholarship, and he only accepted professors with extensive university training for the St. Louis seminary. However, his standards for professors at the teachers seminary were not as stringent. In 1861, he supported Pastor Christian Selle, who had little formal education, to be a professor at the

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teachers seminary. In his autobiography, Selle wrote, "At the age of six, I entered the village school—the only school of any kind in which I received instruction" (Stellhorn, pp. 144, 146). Walther's choice for director of the Addison teacher training institution was Pastor J. C. W. Lindemann, who was not a strong advocate of the teacher. Lindemann had twice resigned from earlier teaching positions after disagreements with the pastor, parishioners, or the elders (Schmidt, 1972, pp. 70-71). When Walther was alerted to the fact that Lindemann knew little English and was not a university graduate, Walther stated, "[That] is of little consequence" (Munding, 1947, p. 206).

Due to the shortage of teachers, the faculty of the teachers seminary was under constant pressure to lower standards. The length of teacher training was at least one year less than pastoral training, and upper classmen were often released early to do emergency teaching. As a result, the pastor had become better educated than his colleague, the teacher (Schmidt, 1972, p. 5). In addition, the Addison faculty encouraged the relegation of the role of the teacher to a subordinate position in the church. In 1864, Lindemann wrote a series of articles for *Der Lutheraner* in which he gave the office of the teacher a secular definition by basing the teacher's office solely on the office of the parent. Walther disagreed, and this theological

debate between Walther and Lindemann was not resolved. However, Walther's desire for Lindemann to continue in his position as Director of the Addison Teachers' Seminary appears to have been more important to Walther than the theological question concerning the office of the Lutheran teacher. When Lindemann offered to resign, Walther wrote,

I cannot convince myself that the teachers who teach God's Word in their schools do not have a churchly office . . . What's gotten into you? You yourself demand that I suspend you from office because you cannot perceive what status should be given to a Christian teacher in the church! . . . This is not a point that would justify such steps; provided, naturally, that for this reason you yourself do not try to cause division and agitation in the church. (Meyer, 1973, p. 56)

Since the formation of the Missouri Synod, there has been a constitutional avoidance concerning the role and status of teachers. At the Altenburg Debate, Walther developed a balanced compromise between the clergy and laity, which culminated in a Synodical Constitution that gave the clergy 50 percent of the vote while the laity received the remaining half. Teachers were given advisory status with no vote. In 1868, teachers decided to exercise their advisory status on a textbook

committee in the Western District. Walther also had strong interests in doctrinally pure textbooks, and he was aware of the teachers' personal interests in the selection of textbooks. Walther clearly did not want to give them their advisory position. In a letter to Lindemann, he wrote,

Is it not a resolution of Synod that representatives of the teachers' conferences are privileged to send representatives to the meeting of the School Book Committee at their own cost? If this is so, we should not overlook it. But already in a different view, it seems that possibly we should not reintroduce these representatives.

After such representatives have once felt their dignity, they can be easily miffed if they are not invited again. This might become the reason why they might without being aware of it, look with some prejudice at any given book that is published, and thus resist the introduction of such a book (Suelflow, 1981, p. 134).

Walther's confusing contradictions in words and actions concerning the role of Lutheran teachers remain as his unsettled legacy in the Missouri Synod. In some cases, his words clearly define

teachers as ministers of the Word. However, his most frequently quoted statement in Thesis VIII of Part Two of *Church and Ministry* has generated inconsistent and controversial translations and interpretations. While Walther was clearly involved in issuing Divine Calls to teachers on the congregational level, he chose to ignore teachers on the synodical level. Walther entrusted Lindemann with teacher preparation even when he knew that Lindemann disagreed with his

theological stance concerning the status that should be given to Christian teachers in the church.

Lutheran teachers continue to receive formal Calls, but they still have no vote and only a

marginal advisory role within the Missouri Synod. The recent nomenclature debate revealed reoccurring confusion and controversy in defining the role of Lutheran teachers. Relying on Walther's words and actions will not clear up this confusing issue. The LCMS has an obligation to step out and clarify Walther's assertion that teachers "who teach God's Word in their schools" have a "churchly office."<sup>†</sup>

The LCMS has an obligation to step out and clarify Walther's assertion that teachers "who teach God's Word in their schools" have a "churchly office."

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## The Legal Context of Lutheran Schools, Part Two: The Lutheran Teacher's Legal Rights and Duties

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Case law has clarified some of the legal rights and duties of Lutheran educators in carrying out their service. In addition, many of the rights and duties have been written into the law. What follows is a general overview of selected categories of these legal rights and duties.

### **Testing and Investigation of Applicants for Certification and Employment**

Many, though not all, Lutheran schools, require teachers to possess teaching certificates usually issued by the state. Many states require background checks for teacher certification or employment. Generally, these checks have gone unchallenged.

Obviously, if the requirements extend to drug testing, the issue becomes much more controversial. Lower federal and state courts have rejected such tests for public school employees unless reasonable suspicion of illegal drug use can be shown. Since Lutheran teachers are not considered public officials, the constitutional Fourth Amendment applicability of these cases has little consequence, especially if a Lutheran

school has a requirement for drug testing of prospective or current faculty.

Nearly all states require prospective teachers to pass one or more competency tests for certification. Most lawsuits charging that these tests are discriminatory either have not been successful or have been withdrawn because the available data did not demonstrate a clear pattern of discrimination.

### **Employment Contracts, Tenure, and Due Process in Dismissal**

The rights of Lutheran teachers are generally conferred by contracts or agreements existing between the teacher and the Lutheran school. Whether these are classified as tenured calls, nontenured calls, or simply contracts and/or agreements, contract law governs the employment situation. According to Shaughnessy (1988):

State statutes may confer additional rights as well. Teachers may be said to hold rights under the common law. Although the concept of common law rights is obvious in theory, it is somewhat more difficult to delineate in legal practice. What may seem to be a principle of common law to one person may not seem so to another. One person may consider it immoral to dismiss a teacher for freely speaking his or her mind about administrative practices; another may deem dismissing a teacher for such a reason as perfectly

acceptable and, indeed, courts have upheld such dismissals. (p. 24-25)

A decision to dismiss a Lutheran teacher from a call, tenured or nontenured, or a contract is not to be made lightly. When a decision is made, the Lutheran school must proceed according to the policies in place.

Courts will scrutinize the tenured or nontenured call or the contract to insure that the provisions contained therein have been followed. Courts will also scrutinize handbooks and policy statements as part of the contractual relationship and hold Lutheran schools to their provisions. In this regard, it is important to point out that the Constitution of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod contains provisions that relate to the termination of called teachers.<sup>1</sup>

It is also helpful to be familiar with laws governing the dismissal of teachers in the public sector. They may help Lutheran schools develop policy that would reflect fundamental fairness. At a minimum, these policies should ask for extensive and complete documentation of all evidence supporting a decision to dismiss a Lutheran teacher from a call, tenured or nontenured, or contract.

Just as Lutheran schools are bound to the terms of a contract, so too are the Lutheran teachers serving under a tenured or nontenured call or an employment agreement. Not complying with the terms of the called or contractual relationship can be the basis

## The Lutheran Teacher's Legal Rights and Duties

for dismissal, and courts have upheld dismissals based on such noncompliance.

While Lutheran schools have the discretion of offering tenure, "courts will scrutinize the policies of an institution which does not have a formal tenure policy to see if there is an informal or formal policy in existence such that *de facto* tenure (tenure in fact) exists." If a Lutheran school does not extend tenure to teachers via either the divine call or other employment agreements, "it should clearly state in a policy or handbook that there is no tenure/expectation that employment will continue beyond a given contract year" (Shaughnessy, 1988, p. 26).

Lutheran teachers, either called or contracted, may be legitimately dismissed if enrollment declines or financial constraints are present. It is not uncommon for Lutheran schools to confront the need for *reduction in force* (RIF). It is strongly recommended that RIF policies and procedures be in place prior to deciding to reduce staff, however.

Lutheran schools may not cloak themselves with separation of church and

state protections emanating from the First Amendment and then proceed with any actions they wish to take. Courts will exercise jurisdiction over contracts made between a Lutheran school and a teacher, particularly regarding issues unrelated to doctrine.

The impact of Lutheran schools being found not to be state actors is that their employment relationships are governed by contract rather than federal and state constitutions. Consequently, constitutional standards such as due process are not required of Lutheran schools in their employment relationships. However, litigants may introduce them in seeking to enforce contractual

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terms. While Lutheran schools may not have to meet constitutional standards of due process in dealing with their employees, courts have displayed a willingness to require a general sense of basic fairness, expecting, for example, that a Lutheran teacher would be able to hear and answer charges. Thus, called and contracted teachers in Lutheran schools have rights which should be protected.

### **1. Protection Against Assault**

The problem of physical assault on teachers has increased in recent decades. Courts generally convict defendants who violate either educational statutes or state criminal codes. Lutheran educators can help protect themselves and their colleagues by vigorously pressing criminal charges and initiating civil suits for assault and battery.

### **2. Self-Defense and Restraint**

Since, unfortunately, Lutheran schools are not immune from violence, school personnel need to understand the parameters surrounding the use of physical force for self-defense or the restraint of pupils. As in so many areas of school law, the standard of reasonableness is used to evaluate the amount of force Lutheran teachers may use to defend themselves or to restrain students. The courts seem willing to uphold the educator so long as the bounds of reasonableness are adhered to.

In self-defense situations, the amount of force deemed reasonable would probably be contingent upon "the age of the pupil, the nature of the attacker's action necessitating defense, and the action of the one attacked after the attack has ceased" (Permuth, et al., 1981, p. 48). As a norm, the amount of force used to defend oneself should be commensurate with the amount of force used by the one doing the attacking:

In order to justify the use of force on the ground of self-defense, it is not

required to show that the use of force was necessary to protect from imminent personal injury. It is sufficient if the necessity was real or apparent. But the mere belief of the person attacked is not sufficient to justify the use of force. (Permuth, et al., 1981, p. 49)

The use of restraint by Lutheran school personnel is probably more common than self-defense. The most obvious school situation calling for restraint is a fight between students. Because of the possible harm to the participants as well as to spectators, various states provide the educator, either through statute or common law, with a mandated duty to attempt to stop the fight and to protect the combatants and others, up to the ability of the educator. If the altercation cannot be stopped by physical restraint, the Lutheran educator should immediately seek other help and also inform the administration.

As with self-defense, the standard of reasonableness is the key to avoiding liability. It would appear that so long as the Lutheran educator focuses on separating the fighting students and does not champion the cause of one or the other combatants, no liability risk for injuries would exist.

### **3. Verbal Abuse of Students**

Since Lutheran schools are not state agents, a discussion of such constitutional rights as freedom of expression is moot. However, a Lutheran

teacher is expected to know the difference between verbally encouraging and belittling a student in the classroom. A tort action for intentional infliction of emotional distress may follow an outburst by a frustrated Lutheran teacher who so ridicules and belittles a student in front of the other students that the student is not only defamed but is impeded from intellectual and personal growth. If a student suffers physically from that distress, his or her case may be even stronger in court.

#### **4. Academic Freedom and the Teacher as Role Model**

Academic freedom refers to the teacher's freedom to choose subject matter and instructional materials relevant to the classroom without interference from administrators or outsiders. In most Lutheran schools, curriculum development is a matter of collegial cooperation, and teaching in accordance with the curriculum as ultimately constituted is a Lutheran teacher's called or contractual duty. To a large degree, however, Lutheran school curriculum content and instructional materials are controlled by forces other than the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. Whereas public school boards may not exercise an individual member's prejudice and personal taste in limiting academic freedom, the called or contracted Lutheran teacher's so-called academic freedom is limited by the religious and

confessional nature and ends of the Lutheran elementary or secondary school.

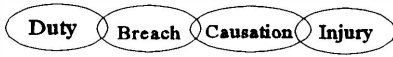
Even in activities outside the school, a Lutheran teacher's expression of beliefs may be limited by the Synod's doctrinal position. Case law indicates that a Lutheran school teacher could be dismissed even though he or she was exercising free speech rights (Mawdsley, 1995, p. 72). Also, engaging in certain gross behaviors that may be deemed "unbecoming a teacher," even though occurring off campus, may result in the termination of a Lutheran teacher. Fundamental fairness should still be adhered to, however.

#### **5. Tort Liability and Negligence**

Negligence is one type of a more formal legal concept called tort. A tort is an actionable wrong which the law will recognize and set right. Negligence is doing something that a reasonable, prudent teacher would not have done in like or similar circumstances or not doing something that a reasonable, prudent teacher would have done in like or similar circumstances, where the teacher had a duty. Simply put, a Lutheran school or teacher may be judged negligent either for an improper act or for not acting properly. Most school lawsuits relate to negligence.

In determining a cause of action for negligence the same formula that is applicable in public education also applies to Lutheran schools and their

personnel. This formula may be viewed as a four-link chain as illustrated below:



The first link, *duty*, requires Lutheran school personnel to meet a certain standard of conducting themselves to protect their students from unreasonable risks. A school's duty frequently is determined by policy. Every official school policy must be carried out by the school.

Lutheran educators should be aware that both written and unwritten policies of the school may become duties or standards against which their conduct may be measured. Any deviation from such policies of the school may be viewed as a breach of the duty of the educator.

The second link, *breach*, focuses on whether the Lutheran teacher breached or violated one of his or her duties. Pivotal here is whether the risk at hand was foreseeable by a reasonable person in like or similar circumstances.

*Causation*, commonly known as "legal cause" or "proximate cause," the third link of the negligence chain

formula, may be the most difficult to apply because there must exist a reasonably close causal connection between the conduct and the resulting injury. For example, who would be liable? The teacher who sent a responsible fourth-grade student on an errand two blocks away from campus during the school day or the driver of a speeding vehicle who ran a red light and seriously injured the fourth-grade

student? While the teacher may be remiss in his or her duty to supervise, the negligence of the driver of the vehicle is the proximate cause of the injuries sustained by the student.

Therefore, the driver, not the teacher, probably would be found

liable, although in many cases there are multiple defendants.

The final link, *injury*, can be thought of as the actual loss or damage resulting to the interest of another. Case law indicates that the injury "is to be physical in nature" (Permuth, Mawdsley, & Daly, 1981, p. 14). However, there could be suits for physical effects or emotional injury.

It is important to remember that each element of the formula must be present.

Lutheran educators should be aware that both written and unwritten policies of the school may become duties or standards against which their conduct may be measured. Any deviation from such policies of the school may be viewed as a breach of the duty of the educator.

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If any link of the so-called negligence chain is broken, negligence cannot be proven.

It should also be pointed out that relying on exculpatory language through the use of waivers for field trips, travel, and other matters as a means of circumventing a tort action is ill-advised. Release and waiver forms signed by minor children releasing their own rights or parents or guardians releasing their children's rights are of questionable legal value.

Although release and waiver forms signed by minors are simply of no validity, schools often operate on the assumption that, assuming the forms are exceptionally well written and contain the appropriate language and warnings, some parents or guardians will not sue for minor injuries because they think they may be blocked by the execution of release forms. Release forms will not, however, on the advice of legal counsel, prevent parents or guardians from suing when the child is seriously injured.

The Lutheran educator's failure to observe a standard of conduct, which is then a proximate cause of an injury to someone in his or her supervisory or disciplinary capacity, cannot easily if at all be waived, especially with students. While not set in stone for adults who waive rights, the value of waivers for adults is also highly questionable.

### **6. Reporting Child Abuse**

Nearly every state requires both

public and non-public school personnel to report suspected child abuse. In addition, some state statutes specify to whom the abuse is to be reported. Normally the local child welfare unit is the designated body.

Mawdsley (1995) lists the following factors which Lutheran school personnel should be cognizant of in matters of child abuse:

1. Child abuse and child abuse reporting statutes apply equally to the public and private sectors. There is no exemption for nonpublic schools.
2. Almost all child abuse reporting statutes do not permit school personnel to exercise their judgement in deciding whether marks or injuries resulting from other than accidental means constitute child abuse. Apparently only social services personnel are permitted to make such a determination.
3. A legislative policy mandating reporting cannot be subverted by a school's internal administrative policies. It is not unusual for schools to have a written or unwritten policy that school personnel are to report cases of alleged child abuse to a designated administrative official. Subordinate school personnel, if mandated to report by state statute, need to be aware that reporting suspected child abuse to a school administrator does not excuse them

from their statutory responsibility if the administrator fails or refuses to notify social services.

4. Any school personnel whose names are reported (for suspected child abuse) should act promptly to protect themselves and contact an attorney prior to granting an interview to a social services representative. Waiting until trial to engage legal counsel may jeopardize one's case if damaging admissions have already been made. (p. 50).

It might also be noted that neither delegation of authority to spank nor consent to spank are valid defenses in a criminal prosecution for child abuse, given the concept that no parent can consent to child abuse.

The wide spread use of copying machines has bred serious and regular violations of copyright laws. Lutheran school teachers should be aware that photocopying is governed—ambiguously to be sure—by the “fair use doctrine” reflected in the 1976 Copyright Law.

## 7. Educational Malpractice

To date, the term “educational malpractice” has not been recognized as actionable, thereby permitting disgruntled parents or students to sue Lutheran schools. The problems involving malpractice cases may be summarized as follows: (1) no standard of care can be determined; (2) both the reasons for failure to learn and how to determine monetary damages are

uncertain; (3) the potential exists for a flood of similar litigation; and (4) courts do not wish to involve themselves with the daily operation of schools.

## 8. Copyright Laws

The wide spread use of copying machines has bred serious and regular violations of copyright laws. Lutheran school teachers should be aware that photocopying is governed—ambiguously to be sure—by the “fair use doctrine” reflected in the 1976 Copyright Law.

The law amended the original 1909 copyright laws to include photocopying and the educational use of copyrighted materials.

Whether copied materials violate the fair use doctrine is tested by such points as the purpose for which copies are

made, the nature of the work copied, the amount of the work copied, and the potential impact on the publisher's market. Ornstein & Levine (2000) offer a summary of fair use restrictions on copying materials for educational use:

1. Copying of prose is limited to excerpts of no more than 1,000 words.
2. Copies from an anthology or encyclopedia cannot exceed one



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- story or entry, or 2,500 words.
3. A poem may be copied if it is less than 250 words, and an excerpt of no more than 250 words may be copied from a longer poem.
  4. Distribution of copies from the same author more than once a semester or copying from the same work or anthology more than three times during the semester is prohibited.
  5. Teachers may make one copy per student for class distribution; if charges are made, they may not exceed actual copying costs.
  6. It is illegal to create anthologies or compilations by using photocopies as a substitute for purchasing the same or similar materials.
  7. Consumable materials, such as workbooks, may not be copied.
  8. Under the fair use doctrine, single copies of printed materials may be made for personal study, lesson planning, research, criticism, comment, and news reporting.
  9. Most magazine and newspaper articles may be copied freely. However, items in weekly newspapers and magazines designed for classroom use by students may not be copied without permission.
  10. Individual teachers must decide, independently, to copy material; they may not be directed to do so by higher authorities.
  11. There are three categories of material for which copies may be freely made: writings published before 1978 that have never been copyrighted, published works for which copyrights are more than seventy-five years old, and U.S. government publications.
  12. New restrictions on the use of copyrighted materials are emerging in connection with the Internet and other digital media (p. 245).
- The legal way to reproduce copyrighted materials is to obtain permission from the copyright holder. This approach is also recommended if copies of materials in books which have been declared "out of print" are needed as well as for Lutheran school presentations of copyrighted plays and musical productions. Generally, a letter addressed to the permissions department of the copyrighted work's publisher begins the process. The Lutheran school may need to pay royalties on performances; sometimes the amount is contingent upon whether or not admission is charged.
- Videotapes and computer software are also subject to the same fair use guidelines as other copyrighted materials. The scope of this article does not permit further treatment, but helpful resources are available to assist Lutheran educators in this sphere.<sup>2</sup>
- ### **Conclusion**
- The foregoing has provided an overview of some significant areas

containing rights and duties under the law impacting the Lutheran educator. This article is not a substitute for competent legal counsel. Lutheran educators are strongly encouraged to retain an attorney if they believe their rights have been violated or if litigation is threatened for the breaching of some duty.†

**Resources, Influences, and Suggested Further Reading**

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1. See Article VI, 3 and Article XII, 7-8 as well as procedures set forth in the Bylaws of the Synod.
2. See, for example, *The Copyright Primer for Librarians and Educators*, by Mary Hutchings Reed. This joint publication of the American Library Association and the National Education Association is well organized and easy to read. See also the Copyright Management Center's website, <http://www.iupui.edu/~copyinfo/>.

## Whatever Happened to *Christenlehre*?: An Historical Note on Lutheran Religious Education

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**T**he *Christenlehre* (Christian learning) was a unique feature of religious education employed by Lutheran congregations for more than 200 years. Following the educational pattern, developed in the European church, of parochial school and confirmation instruction for children, this agency was aimed specifically at the young people in the confirmation class or those recently confirmed. Foremost in the design was a question and answer period of some ten or more minutes usually following the sermon in a regular Sunday morning or special Sunday afternoon service. Weekday instruction was reinforced by reviewing the chief parts of Christian doctrine as found in the catechism (Eckhardt, 1941). This procedure functioned simultaneously as a post-confirmation class for the adults in attendance.

In many urban congregations and in almost all rural congregations the original design was for a special service for confirmands and their families on Sunday afternoon (Wyneken, 1941). The youth and their parents were expected to attend and frequently there was a roll call of all children. These services often

included baptisms and eventually added hymn singing and a brief Bible history period.

On the east coast of the United States, the *Kinderlehre* (instruction for young children) was a course given to young children before their first communion during the regular service. In Midwestern congregations the term *Christenlehre* emphasized a level of instruction for the adolescents. Youth of sixteen to eighteen years were often required to sit behind the young children and confirmation class and provide answers to the pastor's questions or recite material previously learned in the parochial school or confirmation class.

The benefits of *Christenlehre* were both upheld and questioned.

*Christenlehre* provided a learning advantage for adult converts who never learned the catechism as children. It was said that the *Christenlehre* gave parents an example of instruction to use with their children. Others criticized it for having a less than ideal learning environment, in which the youngest children gained nothing or next to nothing from the practice. The location of the experience, the restricted method

of instruction, and the wide range of ages present all mitigated against this agency. Many felt the examination too intensive for a worship service setting. The graded lessons of the Sunday school replaced the intergenerational approach of the *Christenlehre* (Weisheit, 1972).

After the turn of the twentieth century, interest in the *Christenlehre* began to wane, especially in the cities. Part of the decline stemmed from the Sunday school movement in Protestant church bodies, and certainly some

resulted from the Americanization process. The Synod was adding increased numbers of English-speaking members who requested the use of English in worship services. Urban congregations were rapidly growing, and many had two or three Sunday services. There was

"In the sermon one pours over people by bucket-fulls; in the *Christenlehre* one instills with a funnel. . . . Those who think the sermon is 'more edifying,' don't know what edification is. Edification is not moving people to tears, but building them up in knowledge and faith."

no longer time for expanded worship periods (Schlueter, 1936). As part of the changing times, the people also requested shorter services. The Sunday school was eventually introduced as the Sunday morning means of Christian education. Rural congregations, however, retained the practice of *Christenlehre* well into the twentieth century (Haendschke, 1963).

F. Mayer (1937) identifies

*Christenlehre*—frequently mentioned in the synodical literature as a “time-honored” practice—as a practice considered indispensable in Wurtemberg, Germany in 1739. The November 1853 minutes of Zion Lutheran Church, Cleveland, Ohio record the use of singing in the *Christenlehre* as conducted by the pastor, the Reverend Henry F. Schwann, who later became president of the Synod (Meier, 1952).

In the fall of 1928 there were 54 synodical congregations in Ohio and Indiana reporting they conducted the *Christenlehre* (Graebner, 1928). By 1930 only some 600 total *Christenlehre* remained in the Synod (Luke, 1930) and in 1939, 384 were still operating in synodical congregations in North America (Michael, 1940).

Although the Synod did not directly supply curricular materials or any service to pastors for use with their *Christenlehre*, some official synodical status was attached to the agency. In an essay presented to the Board of Christian Education in 1929, William Luke listed the Christian Day School and the *Christenlehre* together among the twelve agencies included within the scope of the board’s activities (Eggold, 1929).

Prior to the Sunday school in the Missouri Synod, the sermon and *Christenlehre* were the Sunday offerings of Christian education for children and youth. This agency had unique features which the sermon did not provide, as the following suggests:

Understanding is advanced by the *Christenlehre* better than by the sermon. The sermon, at times, goes over the heads. Questions and answers bring the doctrine closer to the understanding. In the sermon one pours over people by bucket-fuls; in the *Christenlehre* one instills with a funnel. . . . Those who think the sermon is “more edifying,” don’t know what edification is. Edification is not moving people to tears, but building them up in knowledge and faith. (Stolp, 1954)

Families were also afforded a thorough review of Christian doctrine through these means. Required *Christenlehre* services for parents of confirmands provided an extensive experience, especially for those with several children. Although questioned for its value with children, this practice was beneficial for the religious training of countless adults.†

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“In a completely rational society, the best of us would aspire to be teachers and the rest of us would have to settle for something less, because passing civilization along from one generation to the next ought to be the highest honor and the highest responsibility anyone could have.”

Lee Iacocca

“Teaching is not a lost art, but the regard for it is a lost tradition.”

Jacques Barzun

## When a Student Is Sent To Your Office

In an ideal world ice cream would have the nutritional value of Brussels sprouts. In an ideal world an auto mechanic would return the customer's car keys and say, "There's no charge for replacing your transmission. It was a privilege for me to repair your vehicle." In an ideal world discipline problems in schools would be as far removed from our memories as wringer washers.

But, this is not an ideal world. Principals must routinely deal with discipline problems. How they deal with them does much in determining the incidence of future problems.

Obviously principals need to be proactive in the area of discipline. An effective principal spends much time in helping the entire faculty share the same focus: to create an atmosphere in which all students can become self-disciplined. He has surveyed the school community and is informed about its perceptions and attitudes toward discipline throughout the school rather than as a collection of strategies that vary teacher to teacher. He has created a discipline code that works, and he works to enforce it wisely. He works with the faculty to help them learn more about classroom management. He continues to work hard to get to know the students in a variety of settings (Shaheen, 1997, pp. 2-4).

Nevertheless, it's inevitable that students will sometimes be sent to the principal's office after an infraction. When problems occur, it's important for principals to realize their function as role models. "You model what it means to have power and authority. You model your gender and your adulthood. You model how an adult is to behave with children and others. Especially, you model how a good adult is supposed to behave when someone does wrong, breaks rules and laws, hurts another human being, or destroys property. Realize that even when you think no one is watching you, you are on stage" (Shaheen, 1997, p. 2). After the meeting in the principal's office is over, the words spoken by the principal will be forgotten much more quickly than how he reacted, how he spoke, and what he did.

A principal needs to remain calm, objective, and rational even when the student is uncooperative. He needs to avoid impulsive judgements. His reputation as a caring and fair administrator is at risk. An impulsive response may hurt both him and the student. He needs to listen to the student and try to understand the student's feelings. This does not mean he has to agree with the student. Through probing guidance, he can help the student get through the inevitable blaming of others and begin to define the problem. He can then help the student realize the negative effect the inappropriate

## Administrative Talk

by Glen Kuck

behavior had upon others. As a result, empathy and remorse can then more easily follow. A principal can then help the student develop strategies to work toward solutions and avoid future problems. As a result, students learn that they are responsible for their actions (Gootman, 1998, p. 40).

Students need to realize that there are consequences linked to inappropriate behavior. When a principal decides that it's in the best interest of the child and the school for a student to be punished, the principal must make the student aware that it's being done in conformity with school policies. Telling students that policies need to be enforced makes punishment more palatable for students than leaving them with the impression that the principal has decided to punish capriciously. However, principals need to go beyond merely enforcing school policies in robot-like fashion.

Students—and sometimes their parents—often raise the issue of fairness. In an article entitled “Exploring the Principal’s Fairness Dilemma,” J. Casey Hurley suggests that when a student or parent feels that the principal is being unfair, they usually mean that the principal is being either inconsistent or unreasonable. As ideal as it may sound for a principal to be both consistent and reasonable regarding student discipline, the author points out that, “What is reasonable is sometimes not consistent, and what is consistent is sometimes not reasonable” (Hurley, 1999, p. 83). Sometimes the best decision a principal can make is either not consistent or is not reasonable. It may at times be wisest for

a principal not to allow himself to be caught between the consistency of written rules in a student handbook and what is reasonable in a particular case.

Alluding to the story in Matthew 20 about the vineyard workers who were hired at various times during the day and yet were paid the same amount, the author points out that the workers were paid different amounts may not be reasonable, but it was fair, since the workers agreed to the wage they were offered. Fairness, then, is grounded in an agreement. Hurley goes on to suggest that school officials can teach students a broader meaning of the word fairness. They can teach students that consistent and reasonable rules are necessary, but they may not be sufficient conditions for fairness. Additionally, they can teach students that being part of a school family means living by an agreement, the spirit of which is that each member of the school family is expected to act responsibly (Hurley, 1999, p. 84). The emphasis is on working together as human beings rather than simply conforming to written codes.

We don't live in an ideal world. Yet, principals work toward an ideal world where self-discipline is the rule. †

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## Let Us Not Forget—Secondary Fine Arts Curriculum

This high school has quite a music program. There's a band, a choir (maybe more than one), a contemporary Christian music group, a before-school jazz band, and a chance to be part of a musical stage production once a year as well. You'll even find an active, supportive band boosters parent group. There are a variety of performance options at this school. There's also a problem with this school. The majority of students go day after day with no learning opportunities in the fine arts. At best, they're observers at occasional concerts with rarely the chance to sing except at weekly chapel and sometimes not even then.

Without much effort, most high school students can make it to graduation without developing their artistic skills, without any chance to be creative or expressive, to learn about and experience the interconnectedness of the fine arts, history, culture, and faith. Too many times graduation requirements lack fine arts expectations—even one semester.

The recently developed learning standards for the fine arts, and especially the music goals I dealt with in an earlier column, are all-inclusive. They speak to the education and development of *all* students—kindergarten through twelfth grade. We keep forgetting about those high school students, keep short-changing their need for a complete education as part of their development as human beings, as vital parts of God's creation. Even when music exists in a high school curriculum, rarely is there any opportunity beyond that for students who perform. There is no assurance that a student can have music, or any of the fine arts, as a part of each school day. We cannot afford to perpetuate this omission.

If making the case for fine arts inclusion in secondary curriculum needs bolstering, here are some non-arts data to demonstrate benefits beyond the case of art for art's sake:

1. Participation in the arts has an impact on many at-risk students' decisions to stay in school. Researchers found that 70% of secondary administrators interviewed and 89.5% of the teachers interviewed said that they were aware of specific cases in which participation in arts courses had influenced students to stay in school. Administrators and teachers also cited examples of students who, after becoming involved in arts courses, improved academically in non-arts classes. Among the at-risk students surveyed, 75% said that their participation in the arts influenced their decision to graduate

from high school.

2. A study of 811 high school students indicated that the proportion of minority students with a music teacher role model was significantly larger than for any other discipline. Thirty-six percent of these students identified music teachers as their role models, as opposed to 28% English teachers, 11% elementary teachers, 7% physical education/sports teachers, and 1% principals.
3. "Coming up Taller," a recent report by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities found that "Safe havens of music, theater, dance, and visual arts programs have proved particularly potent in stemming violence and drug abuse and in keeping students from dropping out of school."
4. Students with coursework/experiences in music performance scored 51 points higher on the verbal portion of the SAT and 36 points higher on the math portion than students with no coursework or experience in the arts. Scores for those with coursework in music appreciation were 61 points higher on the verbal and 42 points higher on the math. And longer arts study still means high SAT scores. In 1996 those who had studied the arts more than 4 years scored 59 points and 41 points higher on the verbal and math portions respectively than students with no coursework or experience in the arts.

There have to be choices for our high school students, choices in all the arts and catering to many levels, including initial exposure. There have to be ways for students to pursue skill development, personal expression, and interpretation including—but also beyond—membership in a performance ensemble. There need to be minimum graduation requirements in the fine arts for all students at the secondary level.

In chapel, music needs to be more than a passive inclusion. Music is active; it is participation. Music is one of the important vehicles for the worship and glorification of God. Students should not be relegated to the passive role of audience. Until the curriculum is adjusted, chapel may be the only time each week they can be expressive and artistic.

Be pleased with the percentage of students who participate in the school's performance ensembles, but do not neglect the rest of the student body. Fine arts experiences are not only for the talented few, nor should they be just an option. The fine arts are recognized as part of the essential core of what every student should learn and be able to do. The question is how soon and to what level that belief will be implemented.†

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“In a society that prides itself on social as well as political democracy, the standard curriculum should embrace, without invidious distinctions, the rarer delights of high cultures and good living as well as the denser ones of daily routine and survival. We concentrate on college and university degrees for a career, but we proceed almost on our own in enhancing knowledgeable discrimination in the arts.”

Morris Freedman, *Education Week*, July 14, 1999

## DCE Ministry as a Long Term Career

The DCE ministry is aging as a profession, with more people continuing in that ministry for longer periods of time. Why is it that some DCEs survive in the ministry and others do not? Perhaps the presence of certain elements has helped keep some in this profession long-term.

### Finding Joy in Ministry

DCEs who continue to serve in ministry positions seem to find real joy in working with people. Enabling others in ministry, through the working of God's Spirit, can be one of the greatest joys experienced. As people grow in their faith and live out their faith, the DCE can see an eternal difference being made. That kind of pay-off is immeasurable. When vision for ministry is lived out in partnership with faithful followers of Christ, there is a deep-felt sense of satisfaction. And people who are satisfied with their work naturally tend to continue in that field—a "mission" field, full of opportunities.

### Recognizing Choices

It is important to recognize that we have a choice about what we are doing. When a person feels stuck in a certain place or position, resentment may build and the joy of ministry may diminish. Professionals take ownership of their attitude and life. Blaming a situation on others is unhealthy. Those DCEs who tend to continue in the ministry acknowledge that they have a choice about their life and work.

### Matching Gifts to Ministry Choices

God has called DCEs into ministry, but the setting for that ministry may change. People naturally change and grow, and need to be open to considering options. Asking questions about what God wants us to be doing is very helpful. This type of self-examination can be done regularly. Begin by asking, "Does what I am doing match with the gifts God has given me?" If not, find other ways of serving that make effective use of your abilities and experiences.

Exploring options can be frightening and full of risk, or it can be freeing and full of possibilities. Books such as *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, by Richard Nelson Bolles, can be helpful in examining gifts and abilities and matching them with present ministry positions. God can open doors and call people into other

ministries.

We need to be open to hearing those calls. Once a DCE has explored options and still feels God is calling her to stay in that ministry, she will be more committed to serving.

### **Staying Committed to Learning and Growing**

Having a commitment to growing as an individual, as a professional, and as a team member is crucial to staying in ministry. By taking regular and focused personal time for growing spiritually, a DCE can increase in wisdom, insight, and maturity. Praying, journaling, Bible study, and accountability to other Christians are helpful avenues to faith growth. Without this personal growth, a DCE can lose focus for ministry and direction for life. Taking time for reflection and communication with God is essential in keeping priorities straight and in making wise decisions. A commitment to individual growth will provide the DCE with the necessary "fuel" to continue in the ministry long-term.

Just as individual growth is important to the longevity of ministry, so is professional growth. DCE ministry can often become repetitious and seem like "just another job." However, finding ways to be challenged can offset the dullness and boredom of repetition. Attending workshops, working on a degree program, taking a sabbatical, or interacting with other professionals can contribute to professional growth and therefore produce freshness in ministry.

DCEs also need to be growing as members of ministry teams. Having a commitment to working together, celebrating each other's gifts, and respecting differences can make being in ministry together something to be valued. Setting aside times for staff growth via retreats or extended staff meetings (with the occasional use of professional consultants) can challenge and revitalize teams and help resolve conflicts. Taking time for enjoying each other and celebrating special occasions together can also strengthen and uplift teams. When individuals sense that they are being nurtured through their work as a team, they will want to continue in that setting for an extended period of time.

### **Having Realistic Expectations**

As DCEs gain experience in ministry, they realize people or situations don't change quickly. Personal goals, goals for others, and goals for the parish need to be realistic. Setting smaller steps toward reaching long-term goals can be helpful. Expectations that are set too high will only cause frustration.

### **Working through Struggles**

Ups and downs happen in ministry; thus, supportive people are crucial. If the same types of problems occur repeatedly, perhaps some self-examination is needed. Leaving a ministry position does not necessarily solve the problems. We take ourselves wherever we go!

As DCEs encounter difficult people, courage, love, and humility are needed.

At times they will need to confront people. Supportive staff members or other key parish leaders can provide the encouragement the DCE needs. But perhaps the staff members need to “speak the truth in love” to their teammate. Good counsel can assist in the building of bridges rather than in the building of walls. Spending time getting to know “alligators” can be helpful in breaking down barriers and clarifying perspectives.

Praying for a specific fruit of the Spirit needed for ourselves or for the difficult people in our ministries can bring the focus back to our all powerful God. When people or situations do not change, we need to pray Reinhold Niebuhr’s Serenity Prayer and trust God for the outcome:

God, grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I cannot  
change,  
The courage to change the things I  
can,  
And the wisdom to know the  
difference.

### **Spending Time with God**

Jesus said in John 15, “I am the vine, you are the branches, apart from me you can do nothing.” It is easy to get caught up in the mind set that our jobs—our

ministries—are being accomplished through our own efforts. We often forget that our abilities and experiences are gifts from God and that all we do happens through His Spirit working through us. Ministry requires that the Bible be used regularly, but is that the same as taking time to “listen” to God speak through the Word? Taking time to be quiet before God and to rest in his presence is necessary for a healthy spiritual life. We may presume that our work is God’s work, but we don’t always go to Him in prayer about our plans and what we hope to accomplish. Staying connected to the vine is the most crucial element in determining whether a DCE will continue in the ministry for the long-term.

Ever growing in our skills and abilities to be the best DCEs possible, seeking and finding satisfying work relationships, and knowing we are making an eternal difference in peoples’ lives has kept—and will continue to keep—many DCEs committed to ministry for the long-term.†

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## Two Thousand Thoughts for the New Millennium (Okay, How About Twenty Thoughts?)

Hooray for the New Year! Hooray for a new day as a gift from the Lord! Hooray for the opportunities for ministry that He gives to us each day!

Here is a list of 20 faith-thoughts to keep you rolling into the year 2000. Feel free to add to them, subtract from them, make them better, and share them with family, staff, and classroom.

1. Continue to "Easterize" people! As Wendell Berry states, "Be Joyful though you have considered all the facts. Wear your Baptismal gown to every funeral you attend, especially your own."
2. Look for trouble—or more specifically, look to the troubled—the lonely, the sick, the naked, those who think God has forgotten them. Share and do the Gospel with them.
3. Seek out friendly people—in your family, school, congregation, community. We all need a shalom zone, a grace place, a holy huddle!
4. Ask for help. God's gifts are in the people around you.
5. Laugh out loud—at yourself, with others, and give people permission to laugh as well.
6. Take care of your body—it's the only one you will ever have!
7. Say "thank you" to people as often as you can—and mean it.
8. Pay the rent.
9. Talk to kids regularly—about their lives, their hurts, about their hoorays.
10. Pray and play as much as possible.
11. Always remember that your present mood is never permanent.
12. Remember that on a scale of 1-10, your friends deserve a 12.
13. Be the biggest picture window to the Gospel that you can be.
14. Things are not always as they seem—remember Easter!
15. Accept any compliment gracefully, and be surprised!
16. Remember life is not fair, but God is gracious.
17. If you don't believe in original sin, you have never taught confirmation class.
18. Make sure your "to do" list includes living a "ta dah" life!
19. Think of 20 other things you and your staff, family, and class can do to make the world a better place in the year 2000.
20. Remember Frederick Buechner's powerful thought: "True repentance spends less time looking to the past and saying,

**Multiplying Ministries**  
by Rich Bimler

'I'm sorry,' than to the future and  
saying 'WOW!'"  
Have a WOW day! Have a WOW

year 2000!  
Let's say it again—WOW!†

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### **Position Announcement**

Hong Kong International School—An American-style education grounded in the Christian faith and respecting the spiritual lives of all.

Located in one of the most vibrant cities in the world, Hong Kong International School prepares students for the global challenges of the millennium by incorporating academic excellence with technology, cross-cultural understanding, spirituality, and social responsibility. Offering an American-style curriculum within an international setting, HKIS has a culturally diverse community of more than 40 nationalities represented among its 2,500 students.

Hong Kong International School is seeking qualified and experienced educators for anticipated openings in Reception to 12th Grade for the 2000/2001 school year.

Hong Kong International School provides an unusually stimulating professional environment with exceptional teaching conditions and excellent compensation packages. Candidates should be willing to sign an initial three-year contract. As a religious school, HKIS gives priority to candidates who are active Christians and who value the opportunity to teach in a Christian community. Candidates must be certified to teach and have a minimum of two years experience.

Please post, fax or email resume and cover letter to:

Mary Hoff, Director of Human Resources  
Hong Kong International School  
1 Red Hill Road, Tai Tam, Hong Kong  
Fax: 2813-8740  
Email: [recruitment@hkis.edu.hk](mailto:recruitment@hkis.edu.hk)  
School web site: [www.hkis.edu.hk](http://www.hkis.edu.hk)



## **The Family: A Lutheran High School's Ministry Opportunity**

The family today is under siege. You see it in the news, read about it in the paper, view it on television and experience it in your daily ministry. You can hear everybody talk about it, distribute blame and “solutionize”—yet few are as uniquely positioned to make a difference for families in such an uncertain time as Lutheran High Schools.

Parents and other caregivers want to have a positive impact but are often not sure what to do or where to begin. They need to know what to do and how to do it in a way that does not require months of training and with methods that do not overwhelm already busy lives. This is where the high school can choose to make a difference.

### **How Can We Help?**

Dr. Dick Hardel of the Youth and Family Institute of Augsburg College would like to make these suggestions to us:

Understand what is at the heart of the matter. The heart of the matter is the Christian faith. Parents—and others who care for children in a parenting role—are the primary teachers of faith, values, and personal character for their children. These developmental issues are essential to the quality of life we want our children to have and to build upon for a lifetime.

Provide opportunities and encouragement to develop the four keys for nurturing faith life.

### **Caring Conversation**

Christian values and faith are passed on to the next generation through supportive conversation. Listening and responding to the daily concerns of our students makes it easier to have meaningful conversation regarding the love of God and is itself a way to express God's love to others.

### **Devotional Life**

To pass on the Christian faith to children and youth, adults need to learn the Christian message and biblical story as their own story. Christianity shapes the whole of one's life and therefore involves a lifetime of Christian study, reflection, and prayer.

### **Service**

Children, youth and adults are more likely to be influenced by those who “walk the talk”. The Christian talk is expressed in the

*by Kevin Baker, Executive Director, Lutheran High School, Mayer, MN*

## **Secondary Sequence**

Good Samaritan story, the care of others and especially the care of those in need. Service projects are best done with family members and other intergenerational contact.

### **Rituals and Traditions**

Daily routines, celebrations, and other ways families choose to identify who they are and tell their family stories speak volumes about what the family values, believes, and promotes.

### **Assist the Family in Promoting the Ten Characteristics of Committed Youth**

If we truly are going to make a difference for Christ in reaching the youth that God has entrusted to us in our high school ministries, we are going to have to do it in partnership with the home, the congregation, and the school. Dr. Merton Strommen and Dr. Richard Hardel in their book “*Passing On The Faith: A Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry*” (St. Mary’s Press, 2000) describe this vision of partnership that will encourage and support the ten characteristics that mark a life of commitment to Jesus Christ and a life of witness and service. These are the characteristics to develop in children and youth by the age of 18:

1. Trusting in a personal Christ,
2. Understanding grace and living in grace,
3. Communing with God regularly,
4. Demonstrating moral responsibility,
5. Accepting responsibility in a congregation,
6. Demonstrating unprejudiced and loving lives,

7. Accepting authority and being personally responsible,
8. Having a hopeful and positive attitude,
9. Participating in the rituals of a Christian community,
10. Engaging in mission and service.

### **What Our Lutheran High Schools Are Doing**

Today there is a concerted and intentional effort within our secondary schools to address this issue. Allow me to share only a few of the many efforts that are underway.

*Community Service:* Many Lutheran high schools either offer opportunities for students or require student participation in a wide variety of events. These experiences range from mission trips to Mexico to volunteering in soup kitchens to helping to build and repair houses.

*Parenting Resources:* Concordia Academy in Roseville, Minnesota is sponsoring a program called “Parent Connection” this year. This is an outreach program to association and local community families to offer resources and support in the area of teenage parenting. They hold a monthly meeting that features a keynote speaker, followed by small group discussion breakouts and fellowship time.

*Devotional Life:* Daily encounters with God’s word are a hallmark of our schools. Opportunities for worship, prayer, Scripture study, and faith talk abound in our Lutheran High Schools. Students, parents, faculty, staff, board and delegate members at Mayer Lutheran

High School, Minnesota jointly entered into a Covenant Relationship Statement this year to form a faith community. The statement, which is signed by each member of the faith community overviews what we believe, teach, and expect to be a part of the learning environment.

**In the End, What Really Matters?**

I had the pleasure of hearing Dr. Hardel address a gathering of Lutheran educators. I would like to leave you with some of his closing thoughts and challenges:

- What do you want your students to really value? (Write these down.)
- Faith is caught, more than it is

taught. (What are you showing that you value by your, or your school's, daily actions and priorities?)

- Faith is shared in relationship . . . make your classroom an invitation to see Jesus.
- Hospitality is to invite people into the heart of your home. (Isn't this where Jesus is?)
- Many people are out of breath today and are looking to be renewed. (God can renew and refill us with his breath of life.)
- In the end . . . it's all about God . . . it's about Jesus.

God's blessings to you as you reach and teach students (and families) for Christ!

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“The cultivation of reflectiveness is one of the great problems one faces in devising curricula: how to lead children to discover the powers and pleasures that await the exercise of retrospection.”

Jerome Bruner, 1971

## Become as a Child

Only weeks ago we celebrated again that most amazing miracle, the incarnation of God as the Baby Jesus. In only a few weeks the church calendar will remind us of the annunciation to Mary by the angel Gabriel.

Do we take the relationship of those two events for granted? I think we do.

### God the Baby

I'm sure that sometime during the Christmas season each year, you hear something about the coming of Jesus as a little baby, a helpless infant. That's an important fact to understand. Jesus could just as easily have plopped himself down as a full-grown adult, much as he did with Adam in the creation. Adam is the only man (and Eve the only woman) who did not start life out as a helpless infant. Could Jesus have come in the same way? Yes! Did he? No!

Jesus chose to come as a little baby, to be born just like any other infant. To me, this speaks volumes about Jesus' valuing of children. He regarded infants and young children as just as important as adults. He became one of the children before he grew into one of the adults. Amazing!

### Before the Baby

Did you ever think about what happened when Gabriel visited Mary? What was his message? He told her, this young woman of no more than sixteen, that she would have a baby nine months hence.

So then what? She became pregnant. Usually we focus on that part of the story. But let's look at it from Jesus' point of view. Where and what was he? He was God, to be sure. But at that point he became a fetus. Gabriel announced the miracle, and Jesus became a microscopic fetus!

We are learning much about fetal development these days and especially about brain development. Did it ever occur to you that that same development was true of Jesus the fetus? He, too, developed and grew. He, too, sprouted appendages that would become hands and feet, fingers and toes. He, too, experienced brain development. He, too, learned to recognize his mother's voice while still in her womb.

If Jesus—God!—was willing to experience this very beginning of human life, what does that communicate to us about the importance of that early life? To me, it communicates a great deal. It says that Jesus considered fetal development to be important, significant enough to experience for himself.

Jesus, the God of the universe, willingly agreed to swim in

amniotic fluid for nine months, just like every other infant. Jesus, the Word of the creation, experienced the very earliest beginning of life in the womb. Jesus, the Savior of the world, did this for me!

### **Who is Important?**

So when his followers asked who would be most important in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus had a surprising answer. He took a child and used that child as the object lesson for his answer.

But the child he used was not the four-year-old child I had always assumed. As I pointed out in a recent column, the word *paideon* used by Matthew in the beginning of chapter 18 is used in other places to denote an eight-day-old infant. So the child Jesus “stood” in the midst of the disciples was a very small infant! That’s who is important in the kingdom!!

### **Examining Our Mindsets**

Why is it important to understand Jesus’ perspectives on infants? Because these perspectives are at the heart of Jesus’ teaching. In making the point to his disciples that their notions of importance were backwards, he is making that same point to us.

Is the young child important? Yes! Should the church be about supporting the learning and development of the very young? Absolutely!

In a time and culture in which young children were considered only partially human, Jesus uses this “sub-human” as his example of greatness. Was it only the disciples who were surprised by this? I think not. Well-meaning Christians, even

today, assume that size or age or bank account determine greatness. But that’s not what Jesus says.

### **Recognizing Personhood**

Jesus began his human-hood as the lowliest form of human. He came as an embryo before he came as a baby. Even John the Baptist—the fetus John—recognized the God in that embryo.

When he leapt in Elizabeth’s womb as she greeted her cousin Mary, Jesus was only days or weeks into his humanity. Did you ever wonder how big that developing fetus was in that account of the meeting of Mary and Elizabeth? Wow!

### **Living Our Understanding**

If the very youngest children among us are as important as Jesus indicates in Matthew 18, what does that mean for our ministry with young children? Dare we assume that baptism is all that is needed until they can “get something out of” our teaching? We dare not.

Infants and toddlers are soaking up attitudes and values at an amazing rate. Our relationships with them and with their parents will impact those attitudes and begin them on the path of optimal faith formation.

That formation is their understanding of the miracle of faith through baptism. These children *are* members! Do we act as if we believe that? Or do we wait until Sunday School to begin to pay attention to young children?

But the very youngest children need to be at the center of our concern. That’s where Jesus put them.†

# A Final Word

*By George C. Heider, President*

New Year's has now come and gone. The odometer of years has turned from all of those nines to lots of zeros. The sun still shines, and most computers seem to work just fine. What was all the excitement about again?

The experience of millennial transition is simply the most recent example of a common enough human situation: a long-anticipated event which comes, goes, and leaves us feeling a bit let down in the aftermath. Children (of all ages) tend to feel it yearly at the conclusion of the Christmas/New Year holiday period. New mothers may feel this way after the birth of a child (where it even has a name, "post-partum depression"). Newly-minted PhDs may go through it (then again, producing that dissertation is about as close as most of us males are likely to come to experiencing childbirth!). The air is out of the balloon. The wind is gone from our sails. The party's over.

One of the many blessings of a Scripturally grounded faith is the number of ways in which the experiences of the people of God in the Bible parallel the lives of Christians today. While the analogy is never perfect, the recognition of such similarities can assist us, as we then see God-pleasing courses of action illustrated which may guide our own life's journey.

Such is the case for us in the early days of the third millennium. The experience of the earliest Church following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus comes to mind. They, too, were living in the aftermath of a great event and in the young moments of a new era, when suddenly there was a pause in the action. So now what?

What they did was wait. But that's not to be confused with sitting around. Rather, they waited in the faith that, spectacular as recent events had been, there was more ahead. They needed to be ready and to prepare themselves to take part, even though they didn't know the details. So they committed themselves to the tasks of prayer and leadership development (Acts 1:14ff.). Soon enough, the Spirit came in power, and their lives were again transformed and moving ahead at full speed.

For us, too, it is the past which instructs us, but the future which draws us. The gifts and call of God keep us looking forward and preparing with care and intensity, even though we don't know exactly what lies ahead. Even absent a theological rationale, that's a fair summary of much of our task as educators. But given the example of the first Christians and what we know of how God works, we have all the more reasons to approach that task with vigor in the new millennium.†